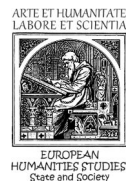




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Myroslava VAKHNOVAN

The methods of diagnosis language training and foreign language proficiency of medical students

Challenge problem. The condition for successful learning at the present stage of education is the formation of a new educational environment that will permit to master perfectly the modern knowledge. The organization of educational process is caused today by looking for new practical methods in the educational process. Providing the language learning quality at the level of international standards is an important task in the field of foreign languages' training. Achieving a high level of foreign language skills is impossible without students' extensive language training. Therefore, the main principle of learning a foreign language at a high school is to teach the students to use a foreign language as a means of communication in professionally oriented communicative situations of their future profession. An integral part of medical students' professional training is the language training diagnostics that allows to identify the possible gaps in knowledge and, consequently, to adjust the educational programs. Many universities entrench the testing as one of

the main methods of intermediate and final students' testing. First, one gets an impression that test technology helps to solve not all but at least a significant share of problems related to the quality of education, to the objective evaluation, to the corruption and so on. But soon it becomes clear that, like any other means, these technologies have a limited applying field, and they also have either certain advantages over other means of control or significant disadvantages that predetermines their detailed research.

Researches and publications' analysis. Research methods in social psychology are focused on learning the social and psychological manifestations of personality in interpersonal relationships, group processes and others. Methods of analysis (diagnosis) of specific qualities or characteristics' expression in the individual are quite thoroughly researched in the scientific works of G. Valeev [1] V. Zahvyazynskyi [4], V. Krayewskyi [6], P. Obraztsov [11] and in many other scientific works of empirical researches' methodology field.

The problem of personality's language training is reflected in particular in the works of G. Danylevska-Babij [2; 3], A. Littlejohn [15], D. Matsko [8], D. Hicks [14]. G. Danylevska-Babij determines the methods of consideration of individual peculiarities affecting the successful foreign language mastering [2, c. 12].

Such Russian and foreign scientists as V. Kokkota [5], V. Kuvshynov [7], D. Matsko [8], N. Motryuk [10], J. Clark, T. Hedge, K. Morrow, J. Oller and others studied a problem of tests' development and their application in practice of foreign languages' teaching.

However, the analysis of scientific literature on medical workers' professional training showed that the problem of diagnosis of language training and medical students foreign language skills' level is characterized by insufficient theoretical development. In addition, in most scientific studies a little attention is paid to learning a foreign language by an active knower, to consideration of speech as a cognitive process that belongs to an integrated cognitive sphere of personality, to the development of a cognitive sphere through the foreign language speech. All this shows the actuality of the chosen topic, and specifies the choice of the research direction in scientific and practical aspects.

The purpose and objectives of the article. Considering the aspects mentioned above, the objectives of this article consist in the development of guidelines for the organization and diagnosis of language training and level of medical students' foreign language skills, as well as in justifying

the benefits of using the test methods for student **assessment**.

The main material description. Foreign languages training means an integrated education of all major types of foreign languages activity: listening, reading, speaking and writing. And to learn whether the students know a foreign language, one must make an accurate and objective monitoring which determines the level of students' educational achievement on this subject [13, c. 98].

The student assessment is an evaluation that provides for achieving specific goals – the control of what was taught. Therefore, it is associated with weekly or semester works, training manuals and academical curriculum. The student assessment is oriented on training course. It represents an internal perspective. The monitoring of the level of students' educational achievement on this subject is, on the contrary, the testing of what a person can do or know using the subject in the real world. It represents an external perspective. Thus, the monitoring during the foreign language classes can pursue different goals, but in all cases it is not a goal in itself and it is of an educational nature, it allows to improve the training process, to replace ineffective methods and ways of training by more effective ones [10].

For effective monitoring it is necessary to have a clear vision on controlled objects that serve as a criteria for the assessment of foreign language speech activity. The objects of control are the skills and abilities of speech with the help of which the students operate by their foreign language skills:

- 1) auditory-spoken, lexical, grammatical skills (language competence);
- 2) ability to perform the speech activity in speaking, listening, reading, writing, taking into account socio-cultural characteristics of these types of speech (communicative competence) [10].

Depending on the degree of education in higher educational institution the student must master a certain level of foreign language communicative competence within the acquired language and speech material.

Qualitative and quantitative criteria of students' foreign language communicative skills in different types of speech activities serve as benchmarks for the responses received during the test.

Thus, the basic qualitative criteria in productive forms of speech (speaking, writing) are:

- the degree of coherence of the statements with the given topic or situation;

- the completeness of the situation disclosure;
- the level and characteristics of improvisation in the statement formulation;
- the correct use of linguistic means for the statement formulation;
- the diversity of using the linguistic means.

The quantitative criteria include: the scope (number of words, sentences) and the speed (the presence of pauses, repetitions) of oral or written statements.

In the receptive types of speech activities (listening, reading) the basic quality criterion is the degree of understanding (general, absolute, particular). The quantitative criteria are the text sounding duration and the speech tempo in listening, and the text scope in reading [7].

The combination of scientific methods of collection, processing and analysis of social and psychological facts makes it possible to realize the goals and objectives of social and psychological research. The main methods of socio-psychological research include: the observation method, survey methods, method of collective assessment of personality, experimental method, method of documents learning, sociometry method, the testing method.

The effective means of control in learning a foreign language is a testing method. With its help the psychological qualities, the presence or absence of certain skills (teaching, communication, organizational) and abilities are established. The test can ensure the successful implementation of monitoring goals and functions and meet the requirements, imposed on the test quality.

The Russian scientist V. Kokkota offers a definition of test control or testing in a narrow sense as a term that means the test carrying and use, and in a wide sense as a set of planning, preparation and probation of tests, a set of test results' processing and interpretation [5, c. 74].

According to the definition of the Russian researcher S. Folomkina the test constitutes as specifically designed tasks and problem situations the use of which during the quantitative and qualitative assessment can become an indicator of certain psychological characteristics, personality traits [12, c. 12-16].

Modern psychological diagnostics uses the following types of tests:

- IQ tests (tasks for logical relation, generalization, intelligence);
- assessment tests (referred to identify the specific knowledge);
- personality tests (to learn the characteristics of an individual, the psychological qualities);

- projective tests (to learn the properties and characteristics in the existence of which the human is not completely sure, does not recognize or does not want to admit them, such as negative traits, motives);
- creativity tests (to explore the development of human creativity) [7].

According to the form the test methods are divided into verbal, nonverbal and mixed. The effectiveness depends on the proper use of the tests, on the compliance with the psychological testing: the correctly applied test allows collecting a lot of valuable material for high-quality psychological analysis in a short time which increases the research productivity.

The test is the basis for solving such problems as [6, c. 134]:

- exploring the student skills' development level;
- language difficulties' identification;
- monitoring the students' achievement;
- definition of the perspective aspects of work with the students.

The linguo-didactic testing is applied in the foreign languages training. Linguodidactic test means the prepared in accordance with the specific requirements set of tasks that have been pre-tested to determine the quality criteria and to detect the participants' level of language and / or communicative competence and to evaluate the test results on pre-established criteria [5, c. 78].

The main features of the linguodidactic test are *validity*, *reliability*, *differential ability*, *practicality* and *economical efficiency*.

Validity is a test feature that shows what the test measures and how effective is its measuring. The validity means the test's suitability for monitoring certain level of foreign language skills, and abilities.

Reliability of the test is determined by the stability of its function as a means of measurement. The reliable test gives approximately the same results while the repeated use.

Differential ability is a test feature which indicates the ability of the test to detect the advanced and not making progress tested students, in other words the students with sufficient and insufficient level of foreign language skills and other abilities.[9]

Practicality is a test feature that determines:

- a) the availability and overcoming ability of test instructions and content for tested students' understanding;
- b) the simplicity of testing procedure in different conditions;

c) the simplicity of checking answers and determination of results and marks.

Economical efficiency is a test feature which involves minimal time, effort and money to prepare the test from planning to publication.

The advantages of test methods include, firstly, a clear and comprehensible scale for processing test results allowing to calculate quickly the data. Secondly, the results of the test help to clarify the gaps in the student's foreign language grammatical competence. Thirdly, the test method can also be used in the diagnosis process of medical students' reading skills of foreign language text. With the help of test the educator can control the level of understanding of the read or heard material by the students.

Based on own experience of medical students' training, we note that the effectiveness of such type of test in the diagnosis of a foreign language reading skills will significantly increase if the text does not contain a highly specialized terminology, slang etc. The defining feature of the proposed text for reading (excerpt) should be the clarity of text, excluding the presence of a complex grammatical structures and sophisticated vocabulary. In turn, the reading control questions for should not be general (or need to answer "Yes" or "No"), because in this situation the possibility of "guessing" the replies by the students increases. The text should not be too large in scope.

The disadvantages of using the test method in the students' diagnosis comprise:

- firstly, while doing certain types of test tasks (e.g., "filling the gaps", "questions with multiple choice answers", "task to establish the correctness of the statements", etc.), students can simply "guess" the correct answer;
- secondly, during the test the students can draw on opinions of others;
- thirdly, the results of the test cannot monitor all the types of speech activities (in particular, productive ones) [8, c. 141].

In our opinion, for obtaining the objective data on the level of students' skills in German it is necessary to use in the language training diagnosis process various research methods which can detect the level of four types of speech formation.

Thus, one of the most effective methods for the analysis of future professionals' language training is the written test. In the literature on the methodology of scientific research the written test is treated as a research

method to study indirectly the formation of human skills, interests and abilities and it is based on the analysis of products (results) of human activity [4; 11].

The method of the results' analysis can be used in the diagnosis of writing skills as part of the student's linguistic competence. The teacher can suggest to write an essay for not less than a standard workbook page in scope. Successful achievement of a written assignment is determined by the student's interest in the subject (problem) of the essay. In other words, the student has to choose the theme of the narrative among the proposed topics, and voluntarily the student is allowed to modify it within a given area.

The most common types of written tests are: open (to verify the productive skills where students form the answer themselves), half-open (the students form their own response within clearly defined context by filling gaps) and closed (the students must choose the correct variant). The open and semi-open tests are called the tests of free-developed answers. [3, c. 15] But such tests are characterized by one essential fault: while checking such a test the educator encounters difficulties if the answer is correct but contains some grammatical and spelling errors. Therefore, these types of tests are appropriate to use in the groups of students with a high level of grammar, speaking and listening skills. The closed test contains a set of answers where usually only one answer is correct.

Thus, based on the analysis of the work performed and written test work, the conclusion about the level of students' skills in German can be made.

The important meaning for testing of medical students' language skills has the speaking skills test in the form of conversation. In the scientific literature the conversation is regarded as a research method that is distinct in a spontaneous form, exchange of opinions, estimates, proposals. During the conversation, the educator can identify the level of students' lexical, grammatical and spontaneous speech skills. Also, being inherently dialogical, the conversation can be used to analyze the level of a youth listening skills, in other words, the understanding of speech perceived aurally [1; 4].

Considering the analyzed material we think that the testing of medical students' language skills should be made up of two stages:

- Stage I, which includes the following tasks for students:
 - a) answering the questions on the content of the reading text;
 - b) execution of tasks for monitoring the students' grammatical skills in German;

c) students' written work (an essay) by one of the assigned topics or within a specified area. The time allowed for the tasks' execution of the first stage should be 40-50 minutes. After the expiry of allotted time the students should pass their works to the educator;

- Stage II: a spontaneous conversation between the student and the educator on one of the up-to-date topical issues.

The educator checks the students' tests and essays up to the next lesson. The educator estimates the students' abilities to conduct a spontaneous conversation on a given topic directly in class. The assessment of medical students' language skills is based on the results of students' scores (ratings) for the proposed tasks' execution.

To define the performance rating of the test the following scale can be used: 100%-90% of correct answers is equal to "5"; 89%-75% is equal to "4", 74%-60% is equal to "3", 59%-30% is equal to "2", below 30% is equal to "1". For example, if a student has got 87 points for correct answers, his rating is equal to "4" [10].

Based on the above, we propose the following guidelines for organizing and performing the medical students language skills' test:

- a range of methods to analyze the level of knowledge of all types of students' speech activities (listening, reading, speaking and writing) is necessary to use during the testing;
- it is advisable to carry out the testing in two stages. At the first stage the student reads the text giving the answers to the followed questions, executes the grammar test, writes the essay. The second stage comprises a spontaneous conversation on one of the assigned topics;
- the text for reading should be small in size and do not contain any complex structures for speech perception and the followed questions should not be general (should not need to answer "Yes" or "No");
- the tests on the analysis of grammatical skills in German should orient the student to search for the unassisted correct answer;
- the students should be able to choose (or to modify) the topic of their writing assignments that are directly related to their future profession;
- the communication (or the conversation) should be spontaneous, the topic of conversation should be interesting and relevant to students and not to repeat the essays' topics.

Conclusions. Based on the researched material we can state that the language training test serves as an essential component of future medical workers' professional training. The testing is primarily important for successful training of German considering that the implemented analysis helps to identify the gaps in students' knowledge and in some way to adjust the educational programs.

The research article makes it possible to conclude that the test as a system of tasks having a specific form and the content is a scientifically based means for knowledge and skills' assessment, provides for the students training results' individual control, manages flexibly the educational process.

During the research work it was found that in terms of the traditional forms of knowledge control the testing is usually more effective method, because it is not enough to assess the level of knowledge only, but it is also required to predict how the students will be able to use this knowledge. That means, the role of psychological testing increases, and there is a need to combine it with the knowledge test. Then the results are to be more objective and take into account not only the level and scope of knowledge, but also the character of the student.

It was shown that the successful assessment of student skills in German is provided by:

- a) the use of a range of methods to analyze the knowledge level of all types of students' speech activities (listening, reading, speaking and writing);
- b) the two stages test procedure;
- c) the use of small in scale text with clear content for control of reading;
- d) the tests orienting the student to search for the unassisted correct answer;
- e) the opportunity for students to choose the topic of writing assignments;
- f) the spontaneous conversations and the importance of the topics for students.

It was discovered that not all of the required characteristics of knowledge acquisition can be obtained by means of testing. For example, the testing is impossible for analyzing such indicators as the expression of thought in a foreign language, the ability to specify a response with examples, the ability to express an opinion in a foreign language logically and convincingly and other particularities of knowledge and skills. It means that testing should always be combined with other (traditional)

forms and methods of control.

Prospects. The designated test methods of language training and level of medical students' foreign language skills are not found out in full. Improving the methods of foreign language training at the present stage and searching for not only the new effective training methods, but also for the new testing methods of students' knowledge and skills are considered to be the prospective issues for further researches.

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Abstracts

MIROSLAWA WACHNOWAN. Diagnozowanie osiągnięć i poziomu opanowania języka obcego przez studentów medycyny. W artykule przedstawiono rekomendacje metodyczne dotyczące diagnozowania poziomu opanowania języka obcego przez studentów medycyny, w tym opisano zalety metod testowych celem sprawdzania wiedzy studentów. Wskazano, że diagnoza stopnia przygotowania studentów w zakresie języków obcych jest ważną składową systemu przygotowania zawodowego przyszłych pracowników sfery medycznej. Stwierdzono, że w porównaniu z tradycyjnymi formami kontroli wiedzy, testowanie jest bardziej efektywnym sposobem, ponieważ daje możliwość oceny wiedzy oraz спрогнозировать в jaki sposób student potrafi tę wiedzę wykorzystać. Zaznaczono, że testowanie powinno być obowiązkowo połączone z innymi (tradycyjnymi) formami i metodami diagnostyki.

Słowa kluczowe: mowne przygotowanie, diagnostyka, testowanie, metoda oceny wiedzy, poziom opanowania języka obcego.

МИРОСЛАВА ВАХНОВАН. Методи діагностики мовної підготовки та рівня оволодіння іноземною мовою студентів-медиків. У статті запропоновано розробку методичних рекомендацій з організації та проведення діагностики мовної підготовки та рівня оволодіння іноземною мовою студентів-медиків, а також обґрунтовано переваги використання тестових методів контролю знань студентів. Зазна-

чено, що діагностика мовної підготовки виступає невід'ємною складовою системи професійної підготовки майбутніх медичних працівників. Виявлено, що тест як система завдань специфічної форми і відповідного змісту є науково обґрунтованим інструментом оцінювання знань, умінь і навичок, допомагає здійснювати індивідуальний контроль результатів навчання студентів, мобільно керувати навчально-виховним процесом. З'ясовано, що порівняно із традиційними формами контролю знань тестування зазвичай виявляється більш ефективним методом, адже недостатньо лише оцінити рівень знань, потрібно також спрогнозувати, як студент зможе ці знання використати. Доведено, що успішності діагностики мовної підготовки студентів з німецької мови сприяють: використання у процесі діагностики комплексної методики перевірки рівня володіння студентом всіма видами мовленнєвої діяльності (аудіювання, читання, говоріння, письмо); проведення діагностики у два етапи; використання невеликого за обсягом та зрозумілого тексту для контролю читання; орієнтація тестових завдань на самостійний пошук студентом правильної відповіді; надання студентам можливості вибору теми свого письмового завдання; спонтанний характер бесіди та важливість для студентів теми останньої. Зроблено висновок про те, що тестування повинне обов'язково поєднуватися з іншими (традиційними) формами і методами діагностики.

Ключові слова: мовна підготовка, діагностика, тестування, метод контролю знань, рівень оволодіння іноземною мовою.

МИРОСЛАВА ВАХНОВАН. Диагностика языковой подготовки и уровня овладения иностранным языком студентов-медиков. В статье предложена разработка методических рекомендаций по организации и проведению диагностики языковой подготовки и уровня овладения иностранным языком студентов-медиков, а также обоснованно преимущества использования тестовых методов контроля знаний студентов. Указано, что диагностика языковой подготовки выступает неотъемлемой составляющей системы профессиональной подготовки будущих медицинских работников. Виявлено, что тест как система задач специфической формы и соответствующего содержания является научно

обоснованным инструментом оценки знаний, умений и навыков, помогает осуществлять индивидуальный контроль результатов обучения студентов, мобильно управлять учебно-воспитательным процессом. Выяснено, что по сравнению с традиционными формами контроля знаний тестирование обычно оказывается более эффективным методом, ведь недостаточно только оценить уровень знаний, нужно также спрогнозировать, как студент сможет эти знания использовать. Доказано, что успешности диагностики языковой подготовки студентов по немецкому языку способствуют: использование в процессе диагностики комплексной методики проверки уровня владения студентом всеми видами речевой деятельности (аудирование, чтение, говорение, письмо); проведения диагностики в два этапа; использование небольшого по объему и понятного текста для контроля чтения; ориентация тестовых заданий на самостоятельный поиск студентом правильного ответа; предоставление студентам возможности выбора темы своего письменного задания; спонтанный характер беседы и важность для студентов темы последней. Сделан вывод о том, что тестирование должно обязательно сочетаться с другими (традиционными) формами и методами диагностики.

Ключевые слова: языковая подготовка, диагностика, тестирование, метод контроля знаний, уровень овладения иностранным языком.

MYROSLAVA VAKHNOVAN. The methods of diagnosis language training and foreign language proficiency of medical students. *Diagnosis of language training and the level of mastery of a foreign language medical students. In the article the development of guidelines for organizing and conducting the diagnosis of language training and the level of mastery of a foreign language of medical students, as well as the advantages of reasonable test students' knowledge of control techniques. It is indicated that the diagnosis of language training system acts as an integral part of the training of future health professionals. It was found that the test system as a specific form of problems and relevant content is a science-based tool to assess knowledge and skills, helping to carry out individual control of student learning outcomes, to flexibly manage the educational process. It was found that, compared with traditional forms of knowledge control testing is usually more effective method,*

since not enough to assess the level of knowledge, it is necessary also to predict how the student will be able to use this knowledge. It is proved that the success of diagnostic language training for students in the German language help: the use in the diagnosis of complex technique of checking student proficiency with all kinds of speech activities (listening, reading, speaking and writing); diagnosis in two stages; Use a small volume and clear text to read control; Orientation of tests on independent search the student the correct answer; providing students with the possibility of choosing the topic of his written test; spontaneous conversation and the importance for students of the last threads. It is concluded that the testing should necessarily be combined with other (traditional) forms and methods of diagnosis.

Key words: *language training, diagnostics, testing, knowledge control method, the level of mastery of a foreign language.*